

THE PHANTOM ARMY

ANOTHER THRILLING ADVENTURE OF THE GRAY MASK.

By Wadsworth Camp.

ONE fall morning Garth paused on the threshold of the inspector's office, and, surprised and curious, glanced quickly within. It was not so much that Nora sat by the window, clothed in her habitual black, nor was his interest quenched by the fact that she knitted deftly on some heavy, gray garment. Rather his concern centered on the inspector, who had left his desk and whose corpulent, lethargic figure moved about the room with an exceptional and eccentric animation. To ease the perceptible strain Garth spoke to Nora.

"Seems to me you knit no matter where you are."

"When our units for the hospitals," she answered, "any place will do. I had hoped my example might quiet father. I only dropped in for chat, and took him. What a welcome! I'm afraid Jim he has something disagreeable for you."

The inspector paused and sat on the edge of his desk.

"I may be, maybe not," he rumbled. "I don't like working through the dark, so I don't like to ask anybody else to do it. I've got to, though. Cheer up, Garth. I'm asking you."

He raised his paper cutter and jabbed at the desk with a massive penknife.

"Ever since I got down this morning," he went on, "I've been hounded by telegrams and long-distance calls. What do you want a holiday? It's apt to be a hell of a holiday. Excuse me, Nora."

"I see," Garth said. "Something out of town's the rumpus," he answered, and Garth saw that his eyes were not quite steady. "Don't know anything about it myself unless they're like Garth, chase a few spots. His layout, it's a man who's done me a good many favors. There's no secret—political ones. I'm in his debt, and he's asked me for a good detective, mind you, Garth. That's the queer side of it, I think. He insinuates on his man showing up as a guest, knowing no more than a random guest would know. Sounds like tommy-rot, but he isn't sure himself there's anything in it. He wants to know, if you take it up, to live quietly in the house, keeping your eyes peeled. He expects you to put him wise to the trouble or to stay your appointment, and he won't say trouble at all. Are you willing to jump into a chase blindly that way? He'd like the fellow that swung the Hennion job, but if you turned it down cold I couldn't hit it, could I?"

"Nonsense, chief," Garth answered. "Never heard of such a thing, but it sounds interesting. I'll take a shot at it."

"Here's his name and address. Catch the 10 o'clock from the Grand Central and you'll get up there to-night." Garth took the slip. Before placing it in his pocket he glanced it over.

* * *

"ANDREW ALDEN," he saw. "Leave Boston from north station on 4 o'clock train and get off at Deacons bay."

"I've heard of Mr. —" Garth began.

The inspector's quick, angry shake of the head in Nora's direction brought him to an abrupt pause. He walked to Nora and took her hand.

"Then I won't see you until after my holiday," he said with a smile. "It isn't safe to walk through the dark. Won't you tell me where you're going?"

"I'll leave that for the inspector," he answered. "I have to rush to pick up Jim on the way to the train."

When Garth had left, Nora arose and faced her father.

"Why," she asked, "wouldn't you let Jim tell me the man's name?"

What did you come to me for this morning?" she said. "No sense in your getting upset. A detective bureau isn't a nursery."

"Politics?" she cried. "And Jim's been from the Grand Central?"

"I know where he is," she said. "He's going to Mr. Alden's at Deacons bay. I see why you wouldn't let him tell me."

"Place is all right," the inspector said stubbornly. "You know it. You are the one with me two summers ago. What's the matter with the place?"

"No use trying to pull the wool over my eyes," Nora answered. "It's the same old place, the same sun, and the loneliness. I'd remember Mr. Alden's big furnaces and machine shop. I read the papers, father. He's staying up so late this year on account of the enormous war orders he's taken. You know what I mean. I know that that means real danger for Jim. What did Mr. Alden tell you?"

"I sometimes think, Nora, you'd make a better detective than any of us," Alden said, with a smile and nervousness. "I guess that's all it amounts to. He's probably scared some German sympathizer may take a pot shot at him for his connections. And he's worried about his wife. She won't leave him there alone, and it seems all their servants, except old John, have cleared out."

"You said something to Jim about me," Nora prompted.

"Silly talk," Alden says, about the woods back of his house. You remember. There was some kind of a fight here during the revolution, lots of men arrested and massacred."

"But without a word of this?"

"I said," he said, "take care of himself. If anybody can, seems to me, you're pretty anxious. Sure you haven't anything to tell me about you and him."

"I've nothing to tell you, father," she answered. "Nothing now. I don't know. Honestly, I don't know. I only know I've been through such experiences that nothing happened to Jim that I could help, I never forgive myself."

The night had gathered quickly, before the end of the last hour, and the great hall had long faded when Garth's train drew up at Deacons Bay station—a small building with a shed like an exaggerated collar about its throat. At the head of the platform, an operator, Garth saw a horse and carriage at the rear. He walked to it.

"Could you drive me to Mr. Andrew Alden's place?" he asked apologetically.

"It's been a long time," he said.

"Anybody can see that the party I'm looking for, if you're Mr. Alden from New York, stay in."

Without warning, through an open space Garth saw a man springing up, and, in the mist and splashing the sky with wanton scarlet.

"What's that?" he asked sharply.

"Mr. Alden's furnaces," he answered.

Garth shook his head.

"I see. Iron. Steel. And now it works night and day."

"Our war orders," the native answered.

"Now we're in the war, and we're never going to be in the world again," he said, wistfully. "And he's sick. Anybody can see that."

"A week or two more," Alden said.

"I'm afraid he doesn't understand me."

"Then," Alden said firmly, "I should let the world go to blazes until I'd look him in the eye."

"It's nothing—cold, maybe a touch of the gout. I sometimes suffer, and my nerves are a little under. Too much involved here, Mr. Garth. You mustn't afford to take chances with that."

"I couldn't," he answered, cautiously.

"It's not so sure about you."

"Mr. Alden's furnaces," he answered.

"Garth, the drives answered, "al-

though Mr. Alden stands to make a pile of money. He's paying for it in some ways. You didn't hear about his yacht?"

Garth shook his head.

"Maybe you'll tell me why," he en-

couraged.

"The drives," the driver's answer.

"Garth, the drives answered, "al-

though Mr. Alden stands to make a pile of money. He's paying for it in some ways. You didn't hear about his yacht?"

Garth shook his head.

"Maybe some of these rough work-

men he's got up from the city, or maybe

He glanced at his watch. Mrs. Alden

for ghostly legends, the spot where the servant had fancied a terrifying bogie, the bedchamber, the death-bed of Alden's valet.

Without warning he stumbled and pitched forward to his knees. Reaching out to save himself, he found to his amazement a cold, and possessed of a revealing quality which in one breathless moment drove into his brain the excuse for those at the house. It was not for the moment the mass of fear from the face of one who lay defeated and beyond resistance, in the path of the shadowy army.

He took his pocket lamp from his coat and pressed the control. The light fought through the fog to the face of the old servant who a few hours ago had begged to get Mrs. Alden, who had been ill, to his bedchamber sealed.

Garth sprang to his feet. He knew his limitations. He must have help, and now Alden must be made to talk.

He turned to the doorway, stepped through the window. The lamp had been lighted. It shone on Mrs. Alden, who went over the writing-table, her gaze directed hypnotically over the room, her eyes on Garth. Garth, since he came from the rear, could not see Alden's face at first.

"Mrs. Alden," he said. "I found your man out there—"

"Not—"

Garth nodded.

"I must have help. Where's the telephone?" he asked.

He started for the hall.

for ghostly legends, the spot where the servant had fancied a terrifying bogie, the bedchamber, the death-bed of Alden's valet.

Without warning he stumbled and pitched forward to his knees. Reaching out to save himself, he found to his amazement a cold, and possessed of a revealing quality which in one breathless moment drove into his brain the excuse for those at the house. It was not for the moment the mass of fear from the face of one who lay defeated and beyond resistance, in the path of the shadowy army.

He took his pocket lamp from his coat and pressed the control. The light fought through the fog to the face of the old servant who a few hours ago had begged to get Mrs. Alden, who had been ill, to his bedchamber sealed.

Garth sprang to his feet. He knew his limitations. He must have help, and now Alden must be made to talk.

He turned to the doorway, stepped through the window. The lamp had been lighted. It shone on Mrs. Alden, who went over the writing-table, her gaze directed hypnotically over the room, her eyes on Garth. Garth, since he came from the rear, could not see Alden's face at first.

"Mrs. Alden," he said. "I found your man out there—"

"Not—"

Garth nodded.

"I must have help. Where's the telephone?" he asked.

He started for the hall.

for ghostly legends, the spot where the servant had fancied a terrifying bogie, the bedchamber, the death-bed of Alden's valet.

Without warning he stumbled and pitched forward to his knees. Reaching out to save himself, he found to his amazement a cold, and possessed of a revealing quality which in one breathless moment drove into his brain the excuse for those at the house. It was not for the moment the mass of fear from the face of one who lay defeated and beyond resistance, in the path of the shadowy army.

He took his pocket lamp from his coat and pressed the control. The light fought through the fog to the face of the old servant who a few hours ago had begged to get Mrs. Alden, who had been ill, to his bedchamber sealed.

Garth sprang to his feet. He knew his limitations. He must have help, and now Alden must be made to talk.

He turned to the doorway, stepped through the window. The lamp had been lighted. It shone on Mrs. Alden, who went over the writing-table, her gaze directed hypnotically over the room, her eyes on Garth. Garth, since he came from the rear, could not see Alden's face at first.

"Mrs. Alden," he said. "I found your man out there—"

"Not—"

Garth nodded.

"I must have help. Where's the telephone?" he asked.

He started for the hall.

for ghostly legends, the spot where the servant had fancied a terrifying bogie, the bedchamber, the death-bed of Alden's valet.

Without warning he stumbled and pitched forward to his knees. Reaching out to save himself, he found to his amazement a cold, and possessed of a revealing quality which in one breathless moment drove into his brain the excuse for those at the house. It was not for the moment the mass of fear from the face of one who lay defeated and beyond resistance, in the path of the shadowy army.

He took his pocket lamp from his coat and pressed the control. The light fought through the fog to the face of the old servant who a few hours ago had begged to get Mrs. Alden, who had been ill, to his bedchamber sealed.

Garth sprang to his feet. He knew his limitations. He must have help, and now Alden must be made to talk.

He turned to the doorway, stepped through the window. The lamp had been lighted. It shone on Mrs. Alden, who went over the writing-table, her gaze directed hypnotically over the room, her eyes on Garth. Garth, since he came from the rear, could not see Alden's face at first.

"Mrs. Alden," he said. "I found your man out there—"

"Not—"

Garth nodded.

"I must have help. Where's the telephone?" he asked.

He started for the hall.

for ghostly legends, the spot where the servant had fancied a terrifying bogie, the bedchamber, the death-bed of Alden's valet.

Without warning he stumbled and pitched forward to his knees. Reaching out to save himself, he found to his amazement a cold, and possessed of a revealing quality which in one breathless moment drove into his brain the excuse for those at the house. It was not for the moment the mass of fear from the face of one who lay defeated and beyond resistance, in the path of the shadowy army.

He took his pocket lamp from his coat and pressed the control. The light fought through the fog to the face of the old servant who a few hours ago had begged to get Mrs. Alden, who had been ill, to his bedchamber sealed.

Garth sprang to his feet. He knew his limitations. He must have help, and now Alden must be made to talk.

He turned to the doorway, stepped through the window. The lamp had been lighted. It shone on Mrs. Alden, who went over the writing-table, her gaze directed hypnotically over the room, her eyes on Garth. Garth, since he came from the rear, could not see Alden's face at first.

"Mrs. Alden," he said. "I found your man out there—"

"Not—"

Garth nodded.

"I must have help. Where's the telephone?" he asked.

He started for the hall.

for ghostly legends, the spot where the servant had fancied a terrifying bogie, the bedchamber, the death-bed of Alden's valet.

Without warning he stumbled and pitched forward to his knees. Reaching out to save himself, he found to his amazement a cold, and possessed of a revealing quality which in in one breathless moment drove into his brain the excuse for those at the house. It was not for the moment the mass of fear from the face of one who lay defeated and beyond resistance, in the path of the shadowy army.

He took his pocket lamp from his coat and pressed the control. The light fought through the fog to the face of the old servant who a few hours ago had begged to get Mrs. Alden, who had been ill, to his bedchamber sealed.

Garth sprang to his feet. He knew his limitations. He must have help, and now Alden must be made to talk.

He turned to the doorway, stepped through the window. The lamp had been lighted. It shone on Mrs. Alden, who went over the writing-table, her gaze directed hypnotically over the room, her eyes on Garth. Garth, since he came from the rear, could not see Alden's face at first.

"Mrs. Alden," he said. "I found your man out there—"

"Not—"

Garth nodded.

"I must have help. Where's the telephone?" he asked.

He started for the hall.

for ghostly legends, the spot where the servant had fancied a terrifying bogie, the bedchamber, the